

# **An Assessment of Commercial Use of Wellington Park, Tasmania**

By:

Tiffany Moreno

Master of Environmental Management

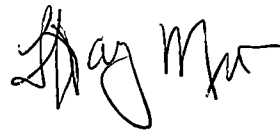
University of Tasmania

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Masters Degree at the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania (November, 2010).

## **Declaration**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tiffany Moreno', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tiffany Moreno

November 2010

This thesis is an uncorrected text as submitted for examination.

## **Abstract**

Ecotourism is a growing industry and Tasmania is an ideal destination as it offers a number of experiences within the state. Close to the capital city Hobart is Wellington Park where there are opportunities to participate in a wide range of recreational activities. However, little research has been undertaken on tourism in Wellington Park.

The aim of this research was to determine the types of commercial users of Wellington Park, assess how these businesses use the Park and determine how the Park will be potentially used in the future. In depth key informant interviews were conducted with commercial operators who lead tours in Wellington Park. Participants were asked questions regarding their use of the Park, client statistics, their perceptions of tourism, and how their business operates. Meetings with government managers that oversee use of Wellington Park took place to obtain a balanced view of tourism in the Park.

The study found that summer is the peak season to attract clients, tours are catered towards a certain client demographic, the businesses operate in the Park due to its close proximity to the city, and because it offers a diverse range of recreational opportunities, and there is a disconnect of engagement with Park managers and commercial operators. These businesses do not have large numbers of tourists in their excursions therefore do not solely rely on the Wellington Park tours to sustain their business. Increased development of facilities and maintenance of infrastructure may attract more commercial operators to conduct their operations in Wellington Park.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

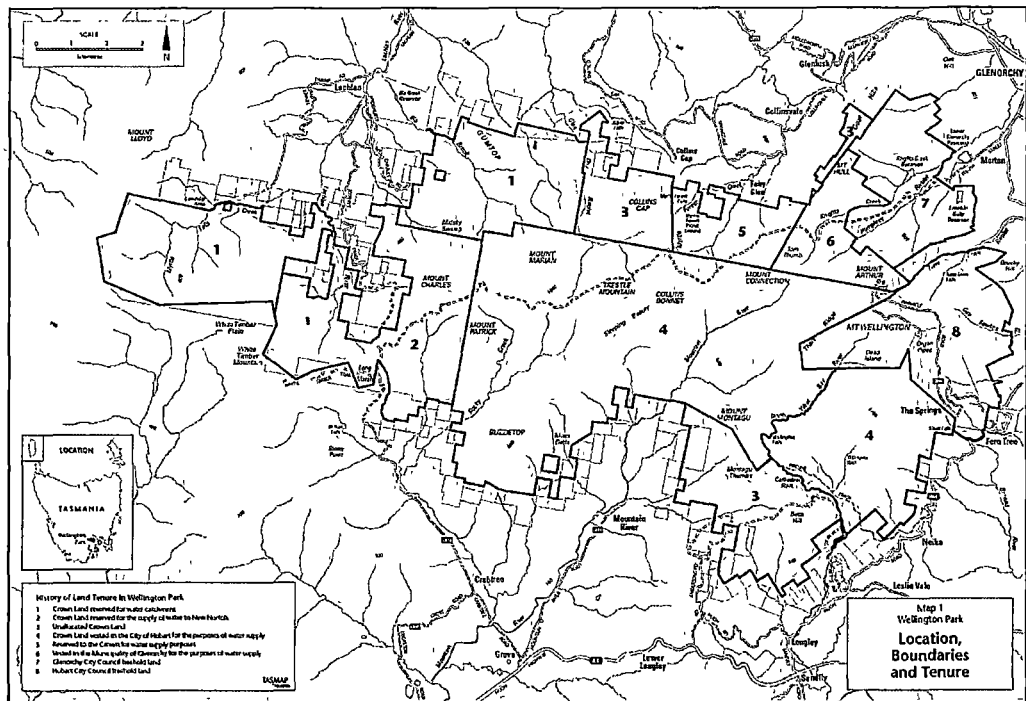


Figure 1: Wellington Park (WPMP 2005)

Wellington Park is one of many protected areas in Tasmania, Australia. As one of the largest protected areas in the state, Wellington Park encompasses an area represented by several councils in southern Tasmania. In the Park is the dolerite capped Mount Wellington standing at 1,271 metres. This iconic flat topped mountain has strong natural, cultural, and historic values for Tasmanians and international visitors.

Aboriginal and European connections with Mt. Wellington provide historical evidence of the many values and uses of the mountain. Tasmanian Aboriginals shaped the land by using fire. They made use of Mt. Wellington for shelter and hunting for food. During European settlement, Mt. Wellington was further developed. The mountain was exploited for forestry, mining, and farming. The area around Mt. Wellington became the catchment for clean drinking water for Hobart. The natural environment surrounding the mountain provided opportunities for scientific study and bushwalking.

The natural attributes of Mt. Wellington are numerous. The location and geology of the mountain creates a unique and biologically diverse ecosystem. The altitude of the

mountain supports several different types of ecotones. A scientific value is placed on Mt. Wellington because of its ecological richness. There are numerous communities of flora and fauna that inhabit Wellington Park and many are endemic to Tasmania. Some species have significant biodiversity values because they are listed as endangered or threatened. In addition to Mt. Wellington's unique biodiversity, the mountain also provides high quality potable water. Atop Mt. Wellington, high levels of rainfall and a moist climate supplies water to the catchment area. The water catchment provides drinking water to the surrounding greater Hobart area. Those who consume water on Mt. Wellington appreciate this water and its physical beauty.

Mt. Wellington is valuable in other ways as well. Locals and visitors cherish and recognise Mt. Wellington as an icon. As a backdrop to the city, Mt. Wellington towers over the surrounding Hobart area. The close proximity of Mt. Wellington to the city centre makes it a desirable place to visit and is easily accessible. Visually, the natural environment includes vast mountain ranges, green forests, mountain to sea landscapes, and mountain views. Many take advantage of this area through recreational activities.

Recreational opportunities on Mt. Wellington are numerous. A wide range of people utilise Wellington Park, especially Mt. Wellington. Some of those users include private businesses. Easy access, a short drive out of the city, and the numerous touring choices make Mt. Wellington a popular destination for tourists. Tour operators who run a business on Mt. Wellington lead walking, scenic coach, rock climbing, and mountain bike tours. Management of activities for Wellington Park is undertaken in many ways.

Since 1993, the area has been designated as Wellington Park. The Park encompasses 18,250 hectares of land and includes Crown land, council areas, and private land. Many values and aspects of the Park have been protected for the aesthetics of Mt. Wellington, its cultural and historical significance, the natural and environmental value, and because it provides clean drinking water to the greater Hobart area. Management of the Park is overseen by the Wellington Park Management Trust (WPMT). The Park is governed by the Wellington Park Act 1993 and the Wellington Park Management Plan (WPMP) 2005. Recreational and tourist activities are monitored through the appropriate management agencies. Guidelines have been set

up by the WPMT that outline the requirements in the WPMP for the acceptable use of the Park. There are specific rules that must be followed by all users including commercial operators conducting tours on Mt. Wellington (WPMP 2005). The key recreational users of the Park include commercial and non-commercial users.

Visitors come from Tasmania, interstate, and overseas to experience Wellington Park and visit Mt. Wellington. Visiting Mt. Wellington is a popular destination not only for tourists, but for Hobart locals as well. Recreational, non-commercial users partake in activities including: bushwalking, bird watching, rock climbing, mountain biking, sightseeing, four wheel driving, dog walking, and horseback riding. Paved roads, fire trails, and walking tracks are available for use by bushwalkers and cyclists. Four wheel drive vehicles and horse riders have limited access to the trails. There are rock formations and cliff faces that are used by rock climbers. Experiencing Wellington Park can also be done through hiring a commercial operator.

Commercial use of Mt. Wellington takes on many forms. Some tour operators use coach buses to drive up Mt. Wellington to sightsee and take in the views. Other tour operators lead guided bushwalks where learning about Mt. Wellington, its geology, ecology, and natural values are the focus. Another operator conducts mountain biking tours descending from the summit of Mt. Wellington. Much debate has surrounded the commercial and non-commercial uses in Wellington Park. A key issue to be assessed is how commercial use should be managed in a sustainable manner. This applies to the regulation of various types of tourism on Mt. Wellington within the parameters of the WPMP. The WPMP includes a section of tourism objectives for Wellington Park. It states that tourism should be promoted in such a way where recreational and tourist activities enhance the local economy and maintain the values of the Park in a sustainable manner (WPMP 2005).

## **1.1 Aims**

The aim of this thesis is to assess the impact of commercial users on Mt. Wellington and to determine if these activities are sustainable within the parameters regarding tourism in the WPMP.

In order to fulfil this aim the thesis has a number of associated objectives:

- to undertake a comprehensive literature review on tourism impacts in protected areas and identify current issues with respect to commercial use and relevant to Wellington Park;
- to design and undertake face to face interviews with commercial tour operators and park managers to gain information on operations and sites valued in Wellington Park;
- to analyse and present qualitative data relevant to commercial use in Wellington Park; and
- to provide a detailed discussion of commercial tourism in Wellington Park and how the sector can be sustainably planned and managed.

## **1.2 Significance**

This study area is unique to many other protected areas or reserves as it borders a capital city. Few studies have assessed visitor use of Wellington Park. There is also no information relating the commercial uses of the Park. Suggested research priorities are outlined in the Visitor Research Audit from the Wellington Park Visitor Research and Monitoring Program (Omnica 2009). This audit stated that to address the lack of knowledge of tourism and commercial use in Wellington Park, research should be undertaken to: better understand and assess commercial uses, recognise visitation numbers and patterns of commercial groups, increase information awareness and distribution, and to gain an understanding of the importance of Wellington Park on a broad scale relating to tourism.

For this thesis, research will be undertaken on the commercial uses of Wellington Park. It will analyse the effects of tourism and the implications on the protected area. This research will allow for an in depth understanding of commercial operators who conduct tours and activities within Wellington Park. This provides valuable knowledge about commercial operators on Mt. Wellington and how these operators perceive the tourism sector.

This research will take into account the guidelines set by the Wellington Park Management Plan. This thesis seeks to gain an appreciation for the opportunities,

experiences, and values obtained from touring on Mt. Wellington from the perspective of the tour operators. Through this research, a clearer picture of tourism can be developed.

### **1.3 Research Approach**

This research adopted a qualitative approach to gathering and analysing data. First, a review of the literature on tourism use and protected area management will be undertaken. Next a review of visitor use and tourism in Wellington Park will be completed. Face to face interviews with selected commercial operators will then be conducted. Early consultation with key stakeholders (Wellington Park Management Trust, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, and Tourism Tasmania) ensured that appropriate questions were asked in the interviews with tour operators.

The interviews were conducted with commercial tour operators holding a Class A or B licence for running a business in Wellington Park and Mt. Wellington. A Class A licence allows a business to conduct transport into parks and reserves and allows limited guided day walking tours. A Class B licence allows a business to have more specific access such as overnight bushwalking tours, day walks, and mountain biking. Since this research required meeting with the tour operators and interviewing, ethical clearance was required.

A Minimal Risk Ethics Application was submitted to the University of Tasmania Human Research Ethics Committee for approval to conduct the research. The ethics application included an application form, Information Sheet, Consent Form, and the interview question sheet. The application detailed the purpose of the research, how the study was undertaken, how participants were selected, and why they were selected. The Information Sheet explained the purpose of the research, why the participant was selected, and what the study involved. The Consent Form explained to the participant that they must sign the form to ensure their understanding of the study, that the information discussed will be kept confidential, all data would be stored safely, and that they agreed to participate in the research. The Ethics Committee approved the application (H11170) and required the Information Sheet and Consent Form be signed by all interview participants. The next step was to identify and contact commercial operators to participate in the study.

There are seven commercial operators that meet the requirements of the study. They were contacted by email and telephone. The emails that were sent to prospective participants included a brief description of the research and attachments of the Information Sheet and Consent Form. Of the seven commercial operators contacted, three agreed to meet for an interview. The other commercial operators were unavailable and could not participate. The three tour operators are: Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences, Mt. Wellington Walks, and Under Down Under Tours. The meetings included various staff from the tour business, including two owners and an office manager. All tour operators gave their consent to be identified. Therefore the name of the business and employees will be referred to throughout this thesis.

At the face to face interviews, the tour operator received copies of the Information Sheet and Consent Form. Once they read over the documents and signed the Consent Form, the interview commenced. The interviews were conducted in an informal and interactive manner. The interview question sheet was used as a guide to facilitate the interview. The interviews went from 30 minutes to one hour.

After each interview was completed, the information collected was reflected upon and analysed. Adjustments were made to refine the interview questions before upcoming meetings with other tour operators. A thematic analysis of the interviews was undertaken. This analysis included identifying the commercial users of Mt. Wellington, learning what commercial activities were carried out, assessing how tour operators portray Mt. Wellington to clients, and understanding the capacity of involvement they have regarding environmental management of Mt. Wellington.

Upon gathering these data, an analysis of commercial use with regard to the sustainability and appropriateness of those uses on Mt. Wellington was made. The WPMP includes a section on tourism. It describes the need to promote tourism on the mountain and to better the local economy while ensuring the values of the park are sustainable for tourist and recreational activities (WPMP 2005).

From these results, a discussion and conclusion outlined the analysis and presented qualitative data relevant to commercial use in Wellington Park. There will also be a detailed discussion of commercial tourism in Wellington Park and how the sector can be sustainably planned and managed. Examining these activities based on the

research undertaken will enable an assessment of current tourism development, planning, and management.

## **1.4 Scope and Limitations**

This thesis focused on commercial operators that conduct tours in Wellington Park. Due to time limitations, commercial operators holding a Class A or B transport licence were contacted and interviewed. Class A and B transport licence holders are specifically targeted because they conduct transport within Mt. Wellington in addition to offering interactive activities and educational experiences.

Within each business, meetings took place with tour guides, managers, or owners. Due to limited time to conduct research it was outside the scope of this thesis to meet with all commercial operators who operate in Wellington Park. This type of qualitative study examines a small yet very specific sample size of tour operators.

## **1.5 Thesis Outline**

Chapter two reviews the literature on protected areas similar to Mt. Wellington. This will provide the framework and relevance of the study.

Chapter three reviews Wellington Park. It describes the physical attributes of the study area. The recreational and tourist opportunities will be presented. The key users of Wellington Park will also be detailed.

This is followed by the research methodology presented in Chapter four. This chapter includes the summary of the interviews conducted and incorporates the qualitative data gathered through interviews of key commercial operators of Wellington Park.

Chapter five presents the results and key findings of the research. An analysis of the data will be undertaken.

In Chapter six, data will be interpreted and results will be discussed. From this, conclusions will be drawn from this study to describe the effects of commercial use on Mt. Wellington.

## **Chapter 2: Tourism**

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The objective of this chapter is to provide background and context for commercial tourism in protected areas. Understanding the role of tourism, operators, and overall impacts are important for the successful integration of protected areas and tourism. This chapter presents brief descriptions of the various forms of relevant tourism. The implications of tourism in Wellington Park will be outlined. This is followed by an examination of case studies that illustrate how tourism is managed in protected areas. This chapter provides a summary of how commercial users are planned and managed in protected areas with specific reference to how this might be applied to better manage Wellington Park for future tourism.

### **2.1 Defining Eco- and Nature-based Tourism**

The tourism literature has various definitions of tourism and how it is classified. Tourism incorporates recreation and leisure activities. Nature, the outdoor environment, and protected areas provide opportunities for tourism. Tourism as a sector includes many aspects, such as the tour products offered, operators and employees, types of tourism experiences, the setting tours take place, and the social, economic, and environmental impacts on a community. Different types of tourism can be identified. For example, some forms of tourism are: ecotourism and nature-based tourism. These definitions are highlighted because of their relevance to the study undertaken for this thesis.

The tourism industry as referred to by Hall (1995) includes many aspects, for example: tour operators; national parks; manufacturers of souvenirs; specialist information suppliers; and specialist retailers, such as souvenir shops. In general, the tourist product for a destination is related to the image that the destination conveys to the consumer and the capital and resources available at the destination. Tourism resources can be categorised as natural, built or human made, or socio-cultural (Hall 1995). Ecotourism and nature-based tourism are two types undertaken in Tasmania.

Mexican architect and environmentalist Hector Ceballos-Lascurain (1987) was the first to coin the term ecotourism. His definition focused on the nature-based experience of the tourist. Ecotourism is described as nature-based tourism that



involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed in an ecologically sustainable manner (Blamey 2001; Department of Tourism 1994). Tourism organisations have adopted their own version of ecotourism. Ecotourism Australia (2010) defines ecotourism as “ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.” The definitions of ecotourism share some common traits as outlined by Buckley (2009): ecotourism must have a natural area base, be ecological sustainable, provide environmental education and interpretation, and contribute to conservation.

Nature-based tourism is a broad term that refers to natural attractions and includes ecotourism as well as all tourism based on natural attractions. It utilises natural areas and supports environmental conservation, social equity, environmental education, and economic viability without degrading the host environment (Buckley 2009; Powell Powell, Kellert, and Ham 2009). This form of tourism entails travelling to pristine locations to experience and enjoy the natural environment. Nature-based tourism activities usually include moderate and safe forms of recreation, for example bushwalking, cycling, and camping (Worboys, Lockwood, and De Lacy 2005). In Tasmania, ecotourism and nature-based tourism are two forms of the most popular tourism experiences offered.

## **2.2 Tourism in Tasmania**

Australia is highly regarded as a top ecotourism destination. Several natural icons including the Tasmanian wilderness attract visitors worldwide (Dowling 2001). In Tasmania, there is a growing market for the nature-based tourism product. During the 2009-10 fiscal year, over 900,000 visitors travelled to Tasmania. More than half of these were on holiday or leisure. The expenditure of visitors on holiday was nearly \$1 billion. When surveyed on the Tasmanian attractions visited, over 222,000 visitors entered Wellington Park. Other attractions that had high visitor numbers included: Salamanca Market, Port Arthur Historic Site, Lake St. Clair/Derwent Bridge, Gordon River, Cataract Gorge, Cradle Mountain/Valley, and Freycinet National Park (Tourism Tasmania 2010). When compared against other Tasmanian destinations, Wellington Park is one of the most popular. This demonstrates the

importance of this protected area for tourism in the state as well as the need for appropriate management.

Tourism Tasmania is a government agency within the Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and the Arts. It is responsible for the marketing and development of domestic and overseas tourism programs in Tasmania. Tasmania is portrayed to domestic and overseas tourists as special and unique. The natural environment is easily accessible for experiencing nature, bushwalking, and viewing wildlife. The rich culture and history of Tasmania is also highlighted. The official tourism website, Discover Tasmania (2009), mentions that Tasmania is responsibly managed for sustainable tourism and wise land stewardship.

Ecotourism and nature-based tourism is significant to Tasmania in many ways. This industry can aid in spreading conservation messages through conversing with and educating tourists while on tours. Ecotourism can reduce adverse environmental impacts in protected areas through implementation of environmentally sustainable practices. It can improve environmental management in mainstream tourism in addition to being used as a development policy instrument (Buckley 2009). Ecotourism and nature-based tourism takes place in a number of different settings including protected areas.

## **2.3 Tourism in Protected Areas**

### **Tourism in Grand Canyon National Park**

A study by Powell *et al.* (2009) investigated the immediate and long-term effects of commercial river rafting in Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP) on tourist knowledge, attitudes toward management, environmental behaviours, and future intentions. The research postulated that the nature-based tour experience and associated outcomes make up an interactional system. The key variables involved in this system are the tourist, guide, natural setting, and the tour. Interacting with each other, these variables augment interpretation and can influence tourist knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour (Powell *et al.* 2009).

The study examined 15 commercial white water rafting companies licensed to operate in GCNP by the U.S. National Park Service. Questionnaires were given to

participants pre- and post-visitation. Trip leaders and guides were interviewed before each departure to investigate trip logistics and operational details. The results of the study pertaining to tour characteristics concluded that river trips varied in length, duration, group size, and length of interpretation provided to clients. The profiles of tourists varied in gender, age, previous rafting experience, previous nature tour experience, level of education, place of residence, and motivations for participation. Testing knowledge of the GCNP natural history before and after their trips revealed an increase of understanding and retention one year after visiting. A change in tourist environmental behaviour appeared to be little effected by rafting in GCNP and learning about the park. Therefore, it was suggested that tour operators had an opportunity to improve their interpretation, operations, and outreach programs to influence and further develop environmental behaviour (Powell *et al.* 2009).

### **Ecotourism in La Paz Bay, Baja California Sur, Mexico**

Ecotourism within protected areas of Mexico is a developing industry. The study site of La Paz Bay in Baja California Sur was examined by López-Espinosa de los Monteros (2002). He assessed the extent that tour operators in La Paz Bay protected areas achieve ecotourism principles. His findings described the involvement of tour operators in conservation and management of the protected area.

Interviews with key informants from varying government, institutional, and geographic areas were carried out. Questionnaires for tour operators were also undertaken. The ecotourism experiences offered in La Paz Bay range from sea kayaking, scuba diving, nature cruises and sailing. The responses of the tour operators illustrated that excursions varied on the number of days the tours lasted, the amount of clients on each trip, the number of years each business has been in operation, and some operators offered more than one type of experience.

Other results obtained from the study related to the poor knowledge and practice of complying with protected area permit regulations and policies, the lack of knowledgeable guides, participation in environmental stewardship programs, involvement with scientific research and environmental education, and support for a quota on the number of people per tour operator to be used for conservation and management. From these findings, the tour operators were classified as either an

ecotourism or nature-based operation. It was stated that La Paz Bay was a great candidate to further develop ecotourism to encourage conservation and visitation to protected areas as well as the potential economic benefits to the local community. However, the policies and regulations in place lack proper enforcement and coordination amongst differing governing bodies. To address this issue, proactive and cooperative action between protected area managers and tour operators is required for the implementation of appropriate education and conservation programs and management (López-Espinosa de los Monteros 2002).

### **Tourism in Tasmania's State forests**

Forestry Tasmania manages Tasmania's State forests. A study was conducted by Forestry Tasmania (1994) to investigate guided nature-based/eco- tours in Tasmania's natural areas. The primary aim of the study was to gain knowledge of nature tours. The information gathered assisted Forestry Tasmania in adopting a proactive approach to managing guided tourism in Tasmania's State forests. Additional objectives of the study were to improve the quality of visitor experiences in the State forests, to identify tourism opportunities, and express the value of multiple-use forests to the Department of Tourism (Forestry Tasmania 1994).

The study analysed 14 guided nature-based tour operators and identified the types of nature experiences offered. Questionnaires were administered to gain knowledge of the operators and their clients. To supplement this, direct observations were undertaken on some tours. The researchers attempted to grade the operators against the National Ecosystem Strategy criteria. The results of the study showed that the businesses demonstrated some level of ecotourism. It was found that most of the operators over emphasised their applications of ecotourism principles. Many of the operators demonstrated some level of environmental awareness and responsibility such as the practice of minimising ecological and environmental impacts (Forestry Tasmania 1994).

After analysing the results, the researchers suggested areas of improvement. They felt that the operators had the opportunity to influence their clients by changing their behaviour towards environmental stewardship and conservation. There was a strong education and interpretation focus on forest ecology. There was a lack of information

provided on cultural and land use topics. It was also observed that few operators offered benefits to the local community. The operators leaned more towards providing economic profits such as the purchase of goods and services instead of providing social and cultural advantages (Forestry Tasmania 1994).

To address these criticisms, the researchers proposed options for the improvement of nature-based tourism. The first suggestion was to have the location of tour experiences close to major service centres for easy access to the destination and ease of collecting clients for tour trips. The second suggestion was to make sure tours have a greater integration of active pursuits and learning opportunities (Forestry Tasmania 1994).

### **Mountain tourism in Victoria, Australia**

The mountainous regions in Victoria, Australia are a popular tourist destination year round. A report written by Thomas, Russell, and Triandos (2005) studied alpine tourism to gain an understanding of the reasons visitors travel to mountain parks, activities undertaken, and their perceptions of the mountains to be more of a summer holiday tourist destination versus a winter one. Research was carried out at two study sites: Mt. Buffalo National Park, Victoria and Melbourne, Victoria.

The research conducted at Mt. Buffalo National Park consisted of meeting with tourists in face to face interviews. Tourists were asked to fill out a questionnaire that determined their age, education level, relationship status, place of residence, number of people travelling together, length of visit, location of commercial accommodation, frequency and season of visits, activities undertaken, satisfaction levels, and visiting motivations. The key findings of the study were that most of the respondents were families or young couples who lived in the east and south east suburbs of Melbourne, many of whom were tertiary educated. The travel groups were made up of family or friends partaking in a day trip. The motivations for visiting the alpine areas were for the enjoyment of nature and for relaxation (Thomas *et al.* 2005).

The second component of the research took place in Melbourne to further understand the perceptions of visitors and non-visitors to mountains in the summer. Focus groups were utilised to establish the reasons why alpine regions are a summer holiday destination. Face to face interviews were conducted to survey the general

public on their perceptions of mountain holiday destinations. The key findings were that visitors and non-visitors feel mountain holidays are relaxing and peaceful. The uniqueness of the destination was also a strong motivator. The main issues that prevent visitors from travelling to the alpine regions are difficult access and long distance to travel to the mountains, the cost of visiting, and the perceived scarcity of activities at the destination (Thomas *et al.* 2005).

In order to increase summer visitation to alpine areas, the researchers provided several suggestions. The first suggestion was to attend to the negative perceptions of non-visitors by demonstrating the many positive experiences available. Secondly, a wide range of facilities and recreational activities should be made available. Finally, the researchers suggested promoting the mountains as unique, relaxing, and peaceful destinations (Thomas *et al.* 2005).

### **Ecotourism in Florida, USA**

Tourism development in Florida's natural areas for nature-based recreation is becoming an integral part of the state's communities and economy. A study undertaken by Stein, Clark, and Rickards (2003) examined the perceptions of tourism professionals and land managers on their view of developing natural areas in Florida as a source for tourism. The objectives of the study were to learn how tourism professionals view nature-based tourism in their region and to identify the issues or concerns public agencies have to plan, manage, and implement nature-based tourism and recreation in Florida. They also attempted to discern planning implications on the perceptions of tourism professionals and land management decision makers of nature-based tourism and recreation in Florida (Stein *et al.* 2003).

Research was conducted in two segments. First, tourism professionals from each county in Florida were surveyed to ascertain their views with regard to nature-based tourism. The results of the survey concluded that one quarter of participants believed nature-based tourism has a direct effect on the local economy, under half of the participants said there are indirect economic benefits to nature-based tourism, and a small percentage of respondents mentioned a spill over effect from nature-based tourism to make their areas more reputable and attract more tourists (Stein *et al.* 2003).

The second segment of research had land managers participate in a Delphi study to discuss concerns they thought were central to nature-based tourism. The results from the study showed that agency decision makers were most concerned with maintaining and managing the natural environment. They felt it was crucial to determine the impact limits of visitor use. It was also important to the participants that there be sufficient funding for infrastructure, staff, and management (Stein *et al.* 2003).

It was concluded from these two studies that the perceptions of tourism professionals and land managers have contrasting ideas and concerns for nature-based tourism development. Although there were differences in opinions between the two groups, there were shared values that allowed collaborative partnerships to form. Working together, tourism professionals and agency decision makers created a tourism management plan that encompassed tools to provide for economic benefits to private businesses while limiting the financial and environmental costs to public land management agencies (Stein *et al.* 2003).

### **The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park**

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park extends along the coast of Queensland, Australia. The Marine Park is listed as a World Heritage area and is one of the world's largest marine protected areas. The marine flora and fauna community is diverse with corals, sponges, molluscs, plants, fishes, sea turtles, dugongs, and sea turtles. The Marine Park also serves as a breeding ground for humpback whales. The natural setting is an obvious tourism drawcard for the Marine Park.

Tourism within the Marine Park takes on many forms. Tourists can be categorised into two groups: commercial users who hire tour operators and private tourists who experience the Marine Park independent of a commercial operator. The recreational activities available include: aircraft or helicopter tours, bareboats where you self-sail, cruise ships, day tours on catamarans, diving and fishing charters, jet skiing, whale watching and swimming with whales, snorkelling, and diving (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2007).

The regulatory framework that governs the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is complex. The Marine Park was established for the conservation, wise use, and

enjoyment of the area. This enables a wide range of commercial and recreational activities to take place. Working with the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority implements a variety of management tools including zoning plans where a permit is required for tour operators to conduct business in the Marine Park. Other management tools include management plans, effective educational and interpretive programs for visitors and operators, and best practice codes and policies. Substantial monitoring of activities and ensuring fair and equitable access and use is required for tourism to be sustainable in the area (Chadwick 2004).

## **2.4 Chapter Summary**

Ecotourism and nature-based tourism are focused on providing an experience in nature where environmental education and conservation values are shared, the local economy is supported, and the business is sustainably managed. This tourism sector is very important for Tasmania. It represents the natural attractions that make Tasmania unique and shares them with visitors to the state. Wellington Park is an ideal destination for ecotourism to take place because of its close distance to Hobart, the natural, cultural, and historical values, and the variety of recreational opportunities available.

The literature on ecotourism and nature-based tourism reveals that the industry is still developing. Around the world, the success of ecotourism varies when compared to economic, environmental, and social impacts. The implementation of quality environmental management and planning for ecotourism needs to be closely monitored. This has very important implications for how Wellington Park is planned and managed. Several studies of tourism in protected areas have been undertaken to examine the implication of tourism, its operators, clients, choice of tour experience, and the location of the tour sites on the environment, economy, and local community. For instance, nature-based tour operators provide interpretation on natural and cultural history of the area and environmental stewardship. In Wellington Park, interpretation panels are placed at high volume visitor destinations such as the Pinnacle and the Springs. Tourists are able to learn from the panels or from the guides on their excursion. The amount of knowledge learned is dependent upon their willingness, the information panels provided, as well as the interpretation skills of



the tour guide. It was found that tour operators have the opportunity to improve their interpretation to affect environmental behaviour of the tourist (Powell *et al.* 2009; Tourism Tasmania 1994).

Similar to La Paz Bay, Mexico, Wellington Park is well suited for ecotourism. There is great potential to increase visitation to the protected area while encouraging conservation and increasing economic benefits to the greater Hobart area. The location and mountains in Wellington Park are other factors that attract tourists. This is comparable to the mountains in Victoria, Australia. Tourists travel to these alpine areas because of the uniqueness of the destination, the diverse recreational activities available, to relax, and enjoy nature (Thomas *et al.* 2005).

The oversight of Wellington Park is complex due to various governing agencies sharing management responsibilities. This is similar to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Other shared characteristics of the two protected areas include: commercial operators are required to hold a licence that permits use in designated areas, the protected area is unique, is a very popular destination for tourists, and the attraction is well known for its extremely valuable natural attributes. Successful environmental management is challenging. It can be achieved when cooperation and engagement between commercial operators and protected area managers occurs and appropriate monitoring of commercial and non-commercial use is carried out (López-Espinosa de los Monteros 2002; Stein *et al.* 2003; Chadwick 2004). The next chapter will examine this thesis' study area, Wellington Park in detail.

## Chapter 3: A Review of Wellington Park

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The objective of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of Wellington Park. The establishment of Wellington Park is first discussed. This is followed by an examination of Park attributes including natural values, recreational and tourist opportunities. Finally, key users of Wellington Park are described.

### 3.1 Introduction

The Wellington Park Act 1993 designates Wellington Park as a protected area to maintain and protect a wide range of natural and cultural values. For example, flora and fauna, Aboriginal heritage, geomorphological formations, and the water catchment are protected within Wellington Park. The Park is listed as a Category II, national park, protected area under World Conservation Union (IUCN 1994) guidelines. Category II protected areas are:

Large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities (IUCN 1994).

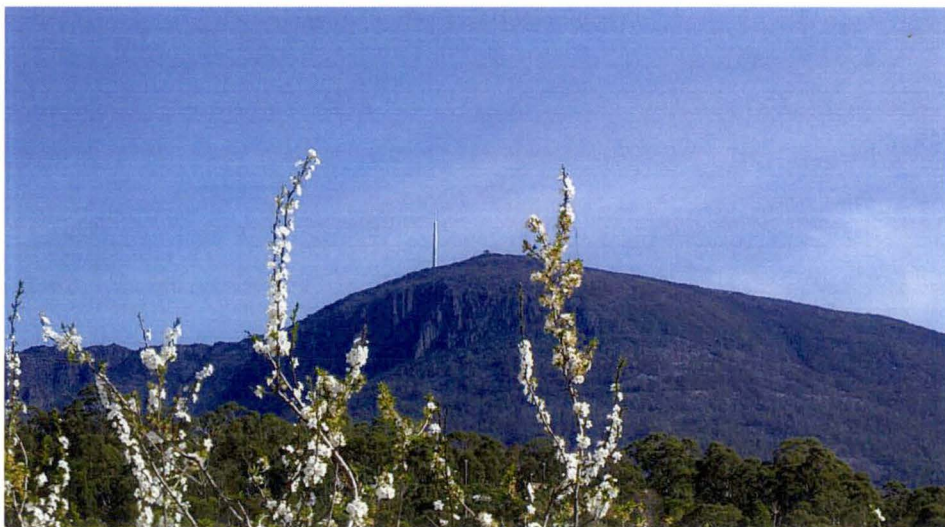


Photo 1: Mt Wellington, Tiffany Moreno 2010 ©

### 3.2 Park Description

Wellington Park encompasses an area of 18, 250 hectares. This makes the Park one of the largest reserves in Tasmania outside the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Standing at 1,271 metres above sea level, is Mount Wellington, the highest peak in Wellington Park. A portion of the Park borders the capital city Hobart. There are several access points along the perimeter of the Park. The primary destination for most visitors is Mt. Wellington and the Springs, which can be accessed from Pinnacle Road at Fern Tree. Other access points include the Glenorchy Mountain Bike Park and Myrtle Forest in Collinsvale (Figure 2). During the winter season, access may be restricted at Pinnacle Road due to unsafe road conditions caused by excess snow and ice on the road (WPMT 2010).

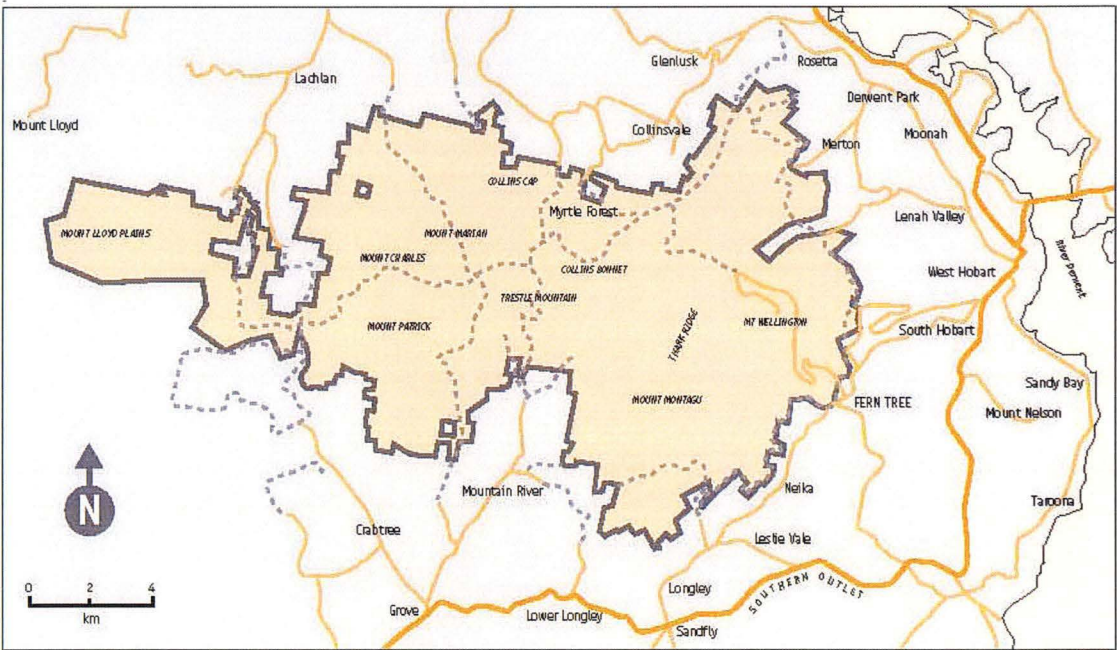
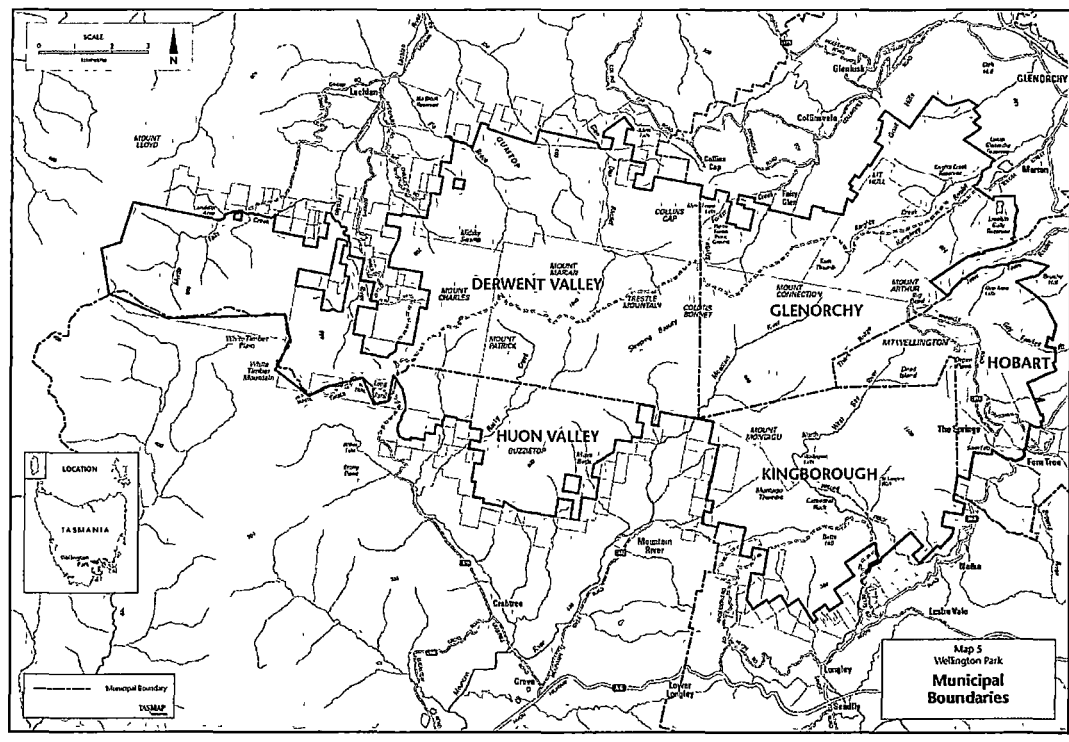


Figure 2: Wellington Park (WPMT 2010)

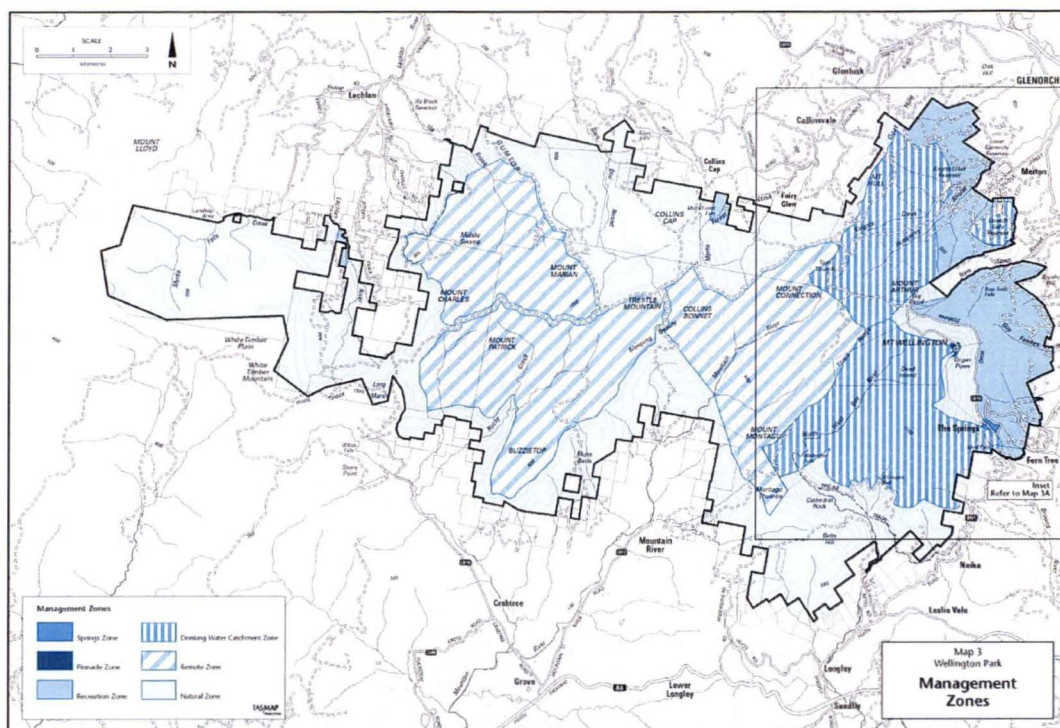
Wellington Park encompasses five local government areas: Hobart, Glenorchy, Derwent Valley, Huon Valley, and Kingborough (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Government Areas (WPMP 2005)**

There are six designated management zones (Figure 4): Springs, Pinnacle, Recreation, Natural, Remote, and Drinking Water Catchment. The objectives of these zones are to: “take account of localised features, conditions, and values; conserve environmental, cultural, tourism and recreational, and water catchment values; protect ecological processes and diversity; and provide a range of tourism and recreational opportunities” (WPMP 2005).





**Figure 4: Management Zones (WPMP 2005)**

The Springs Zone serves as the primary area where visitor and management services and facilities are located and provides various tourism and recreational opportunities. The Pinnacle Zone provides tourism and recreational options that include an observation centre and sightseeing of the alpine area located at the summit of Mt. Wellington as well as communication facilities. The Recreation Zone incorporates easily accessible areas for nature-based tourism and recreation in a mostly natural environment. The Natural Zone includes areas of untouched forest and alpine areas, parts of which contain flora and fauna of conservation significance and geodiversity features. The Remote Zone encompasses the more isolated areas of Wellington Park where protection of water quality is assured in addition to the conservation of important flora and fauna and geodiversity features. The Drinking Water Catchment Zone encompasses the drinking water catchments utilised by Southern Water (WPMP 2005).

### **3.3 Administration and Management**

Wellington Park is managed by the Wellington Park Management Trust (WPMT). The Trust is made up of members from: Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service; Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water, and Environment; Hobart City

Council; Glenorchy City Council; Southern Water; and Tourism Tasmania. Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service oversee the Crown land in the west side of the Park. Hobart and Glenorchy City Councils manage land on the east and north side of the Park respectively. Southern Water is responsible for the water catchment area including water storage (WPMT 2010). Figure 5 shows the area of responsibility for each management authority.

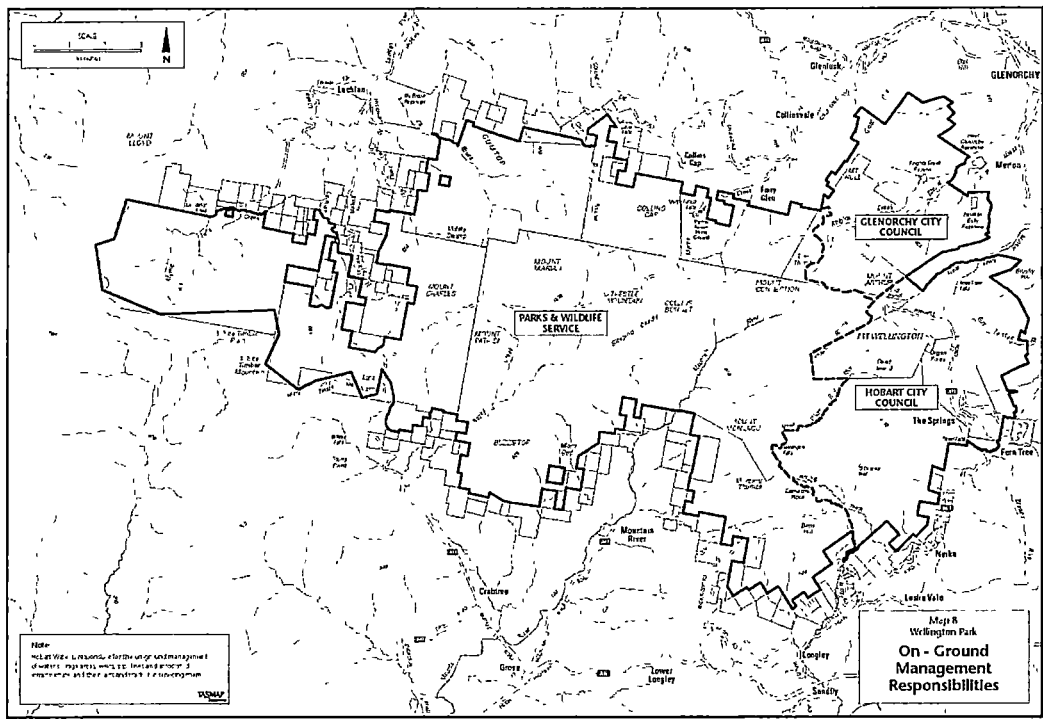


Figure 5: Management Responsibilities (WPMP 2005)

### 3.4 Park Attributes



**Photo 2: Eastward view from Mt Wellington, Tiffany Moreno 2010 ©**

#### 3.4.1 Natural values

The natural environment of Wellington Park is unique. The distinctive landscape of the Park can be attributed to its geology. Across the park there are dolerite, sandstone, and mudstone formations. The geodiversity of Wellington Park supports various types of ecosystems. The multitude of diverse habitats enables the plants and animals in the Park to be ecologically rich.

There are over 500 species of flora identified in Wellington Park, 80 that are endemic to Tasmania, 164 mosses, 130 liverwort, and 95 macrolichen species. All of these plants are protected and a permit is required to collect or remove any vegetation from Wellington Park. There is also an abundance of fauna found in the Park. There are at least 67 bird species, peregrine falcon nest sites, over 5,000 invertebrates, and numerous endemic species (including marsupials, birds, terrestrial crustaceans, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates). These animals are protected and permits are required for collection in the Park. Although Wellington Park has a biologically rich number of flora and fauna species, some are very rare, have a limited distribution in

Wellington Park, and are listed as threatened or endangered species. Some threatened or endangered species found in Wellington Park include: the eastern barred bandicoot (*Perameles gunnii*), grey goshawk (*Accipiter novaehollandiae*), swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*), wedge tailed eagle (*Aquila audax fleayi*), mountain shrimp (*Anaspides tasmaniae*), Mt. Wellington snail (*Roblinella Agnewi*), caddis fly (*Hydrobiosella armata*), Tasmanian scorpionfly (*Apteropanorpa tasmanica*), and velvet worm (*Tasmanipatus sp.*) (WPMT 2010).

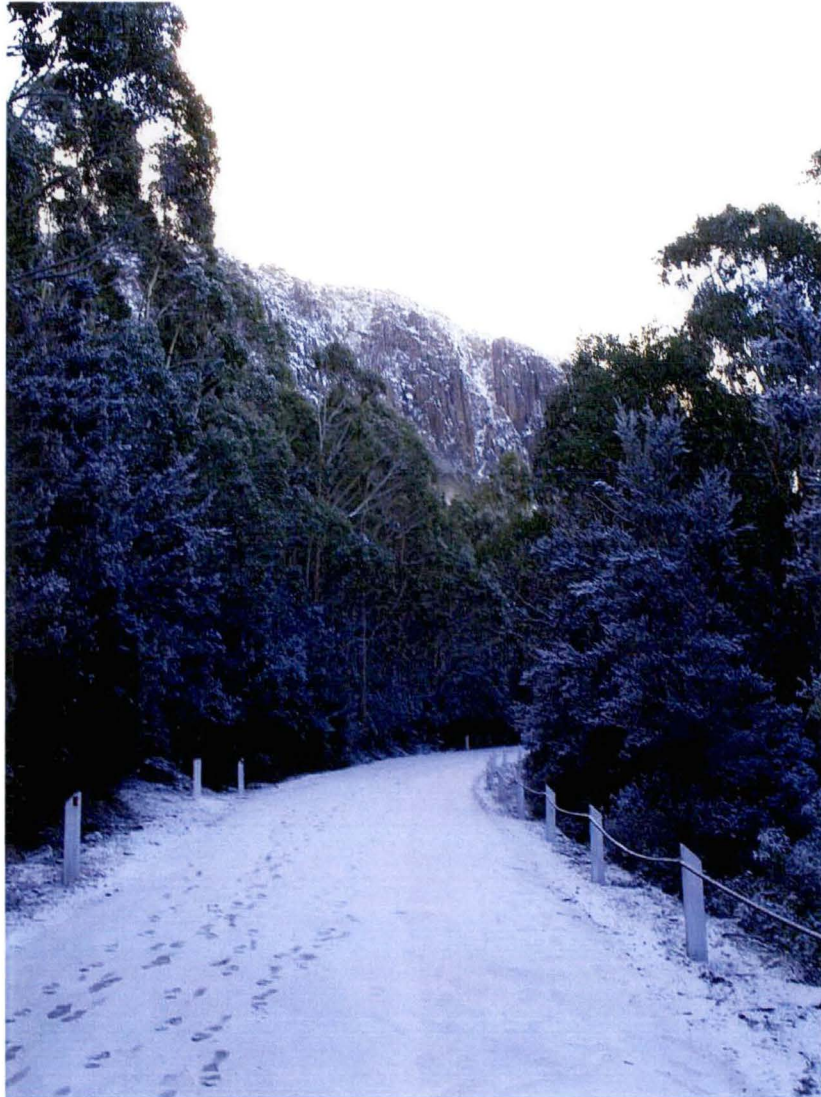
Water is another natural attribute valued on Mt. Wellington. The weather generated in southern Tasmania provides high rainfall that feeds into rivers, streams, and local water catchments, some of which include the Mt. Wellington water catchment. The water that is captured gets treated and provides potable water for surrounding Hobart communities. This catchment is managed by Southern Water.

Across the Wellington Range, the most recognisable peak is Mt. Wellington. For Hobart locals and visitors alike, Mt. Wellington is an icon. Mt. Wellington exhibits vast landscapes that are the focus of photographs, people's fond memories, and tourist destinations. There are scenic mountain views: from across the Derwent River, at the Hobart waterfront, at the base of the mountain, while ascending the mountain, and from the peak. The geologic formations, the pinnacle, the dry sclerophyll forests, and mountainous slopes are some additional notable aesthetic features. Looking to Mt. Wellington to assess the day's weather is not uncommon for Hobart residents. Mt. Wellington is Hobart's barometer, thermometer, and weather forecaster (Stoddart 2004).

The natural wilderness of the Park surrounds residents and visitors to southern Tasmania. Numerous Hobart residents cherish Mt. Wellington and have shared many stories, some of which have been documented and put together in a book by Emily Stoddart called *The Mountain: a people's perspective*. Stories include childhood memories of exploring the walking tracks with family, skiing on the steep snow covered slopes, rock climbing up challenging rock faces, and having friends and family gathered for a picnic. The settings of these stories take place at various locations in Wellington Park. Some include Fern Tree Park, Fern Tree Bower, The Springs, The Chalet, The Pinnacle, Myrtle Forest, Waterworks Reserve, and Tolosa



Park. These locations have areas for a picnic, barbeques, and toilets. Some have fire pits. Each place has its own unique feel and natural setting.



**Photo 3: Snow on Pinnacle Road, Shaun Brooks 2007 ©**

### **3.4.2 Recreation and tourism**

Wellington Park supports a wide range of recreational activities. The geology, ecology, and physical formations within the Park enable visitors to explore it in numerous ways. For example, some choose to rock climb, mountain bike, or go four wheel driving. Those interested in exploring nature can bird watch and go bushwalking. Other recreational options include dog walking and horseback riding. There are selected trails for each type of activity, although some trails allow shared

use. All trails designated for walking, biking, horse riding and four wheel driving are graded for the level of use, such as easy or moderate.

A significant portion of Tasmania's economy is reliant on the tourism sector. Nearly 1 million visitors travel to Tasmania each year. More than half of Tasmanian visitors each year travel to the state on holiday or for leisure. Natural attractions in protected areas draw large numbers of tourists. Mt. Wellington is one of the most popular destinations recorded. On average, there are at least 250,000 visitors annually (Tourism Tasmania 2010). The touring opportunities within Wellington Park are numerous. Several accredited commercial operators conduct various types of tours ranging from guided bushwalks to descending down Mt. Wellington on mountain bikes.

Tour operators offer a wide range of excursions on Mt. Wellington. In order to conduct business on Mt. Wellington, tour operators must apply for a Commercial Visitor Services Licence (CVS) through the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (TPWS). The objective of the CVS is to: recruit businesses to meet minimum operating requirements; have a mechanism for monitoring and instructing the use of public lands with the key objective of ensuring these activities do not threaten conservation values; ensure the safety of clients, and guarantee that operators comply with guidelines and requirements of relevant management plans and governing authorities; and foster a public/private partnership (Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service 2010).

The CVS licence is separated into three types: Class A, Class B, and Transport. The licence designation defines the areas and activities that a licence holder is limited to. A Class A licence permits the business to conduct transport in Wellington Park and offer limited guided day walking tours. There are specific walking tracks as described by TPWS Walking Track Classification System that Class A licensees are permitted to conduct tours. Class B licence holders are permitted to the same conditions as a Class A licence in addition to gaining access to specific areas and tracks for activities such as mountain biking. There are two forms of Transport licences: tourism transport service and base transport service. This licence provides basic access in Wellington Park where transport of clients in and out of Wellington Park is permitted.

### **3.5 Key users**

Wellington Park is visited by outdoor enthusiasts. People from all walks of life visit the Park and partake in numerous types of activities. These include: bushwalking, mountain biking, bird watching, four wheel driving, horse riding, rock climbing, and dog walking. Local residents as well as interstate and international tourists explore the Park.

#### **3.5.1 Bushwalkers**

There are many types of walking tracks for bushwalkers ranging from easy tracks well suited for families or more exposed rugged tracks for the adventurer. A bushwalking guide of walking tracks within the Park is available from the Wellington Park Management Trust (see appendices 1-3). There are 19 walking tracks listed. They are categorised as very short walks (20-45 minute return), short walks (1-2 hours return), half day walks (3-4 hours return), and all day walks (5-7 hours return). Walks depart from a number of different places including the Springs, Fern Tree, Fern Tree Park, Pinnacle car park, Fern Glade car park, Pinnacle Road, Old Farm Road, Lenah Valley Road, Myrtle Forest picnic area, Collinsvale, and Neika. Bushwalkers have the option of joining professionally guided walking tours as well (see Chapter 4, sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3).

#### **3.5.2 Mountain bikers**

Chiu and Kriwoken (2003) examined the management of recreational mountain biking in Wellington Park. Due to increased popularity and use of mountain bikes, there are significant potential impacts to the physical environment, in the social context and regarding management. Physical impacts include compaction of soil and increased rates of erosion. Yet the physical impacts observed are comparable to the impacts created by other users such as bushwalkers (Chiu and Kriwoken 2003). The research from this study was used by Wellington Park Management Trust to create the Mountain Bike Strategy for Wellington Park (Chiu and Kriwoken 2003).

Mountain bike riding in Wellington Park is permitted on formed roads, fire trails, and specific walking tracks. Some cyclists choose to ride on the roads while others choose to venture on the downhill tracks. There is an opportunity for those interested

in doing a ride down Mt. Wellington to participate in a professionally guided tour (refer to Chapter four, section 4.1.1).

### **3.5.3 Other recreational users**

For those wanting to explore the park in a different way, four wheel driving is an option. During the summer season when the tracks are the driest, it is permissible that four wheel driving take place on designated routes. Jeffreys Track and the East West Trail allow four wheel driving (see appendix 4). Policies and guidelines must be adhered to in order to drive off road in recreational vehicles on public land, including Wellington Park (Recreational Vehicle Working Group 2005).

Horse riding in Wellington Park offers riders a scenic and remote opportunity. There are over 75 kilometres of trails. Eight tracks are available to horse riders and the length of trails range from two to 22 kilometres. Permits and gate keys are required to access all tracks. Many of the trails are shared by bushwalkers, mountain bikers, and four wheel drive vehicles. Specific horse riding guidelines must be obeyed by all riders, including: limiting environmental impacts by taking necessary steps to reduce introduction of invasive species, pathogens, and weeds; riding safely; respecting other park users; restricting the horses from grazing and access to bodies of water; not trespassing on private land; and cleaning up after the horse.

Rock climbing is another opportunity that the Park offers. There are bouldering, and single and multi-pitch routes on Mt. Wellington. The Organ Pipes and other locations lower on the mountain are suggested places to rock climb. A rock climbing guide was compiled by local rock climbers to provide advice on climbing locations on Mt. Wellington. This guide has not been guaranteed to be accurate or lawful by WPMT (WPMT 2010).

Dog owners are permitted to walk dogs in designated areas in the Recreation Zone. The trails include the lower eastern foothills of Mt. Wellington, trails above Tolosa Park in Glenorchy, Jeffreys Track, and White Timber Trail. Dogs are also permitted at the Pinnacle provided they remain inside a vehicle. When walking dogs, they must be on a lead and be properly cleaned to reduce contamination of waterways.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

Wellington Park is a unique protected area that exhibits natural, cultural, historical, and social values. The Park is comprised of different land tenures. Therefore, a selection of managers oversee the area. The tallest peak in the Park, Mt. Wellington, is one of the most popular natural places to visit in Tasmania. Commercial and non-commercial users take advantage of the wide range of recreational activities that are permitted in Wellington Park. Commercial operators utilise various Park attributes to conduct tours on Mt. Wellington. An understanding of the importance of Wellington Park to all users enables a proper assessment of commercial use.

## Chapter 4: Key Informant Interviews

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The objective of this chapter is to summarise the key informant interviews that were conducted. Interviews took place with commercial operators (including owners, managers, and guides) and managers from Wellington Park Management Trust, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, and Tourism Tasmania. The results of these interviews will be presented. The interviews with commercial operators include a brief description of the business, transport used, number of employees, trips, and clients, tour logistics, and views on tourism and management of Mt. Wellington. The interviews with managers include an investigation of their role in environmental management and perspectives of tourism on Mt. Wellington.

### 4.1 Commercial Operators

Seven commercial operators conduct tours on Mt. Wellington. Three out of the seven operators agreed to participate in this study: Under Down Under Tours, Mt. Wellington Walks, and Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences. The other commercial operators were not available to participate. The interviews included the following questions regarding the business:

- How does the business operate?
- What tours do you offer and how long do tours go for?
- How do you attract clients? How do you market your business?
- How do you envisage tourism further developing on Mt. Wellington?

The participants included:

- Andrew West, Managing Director, Under Down Under Tours
- Leigh Kemp, Administrator, Mt. Wellington Walks
- Graham McLean, Owner and Manager, Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences.

#### 4.1.1 Under Down Under Tours

Under Down Under Tours conducts both eco- and nature- based tours, ranging from day tours, multi-day bushwalks, and mountain biking. The Mt. Wellington Descent is their featured Mt. Wellington tour product. It is a mountain bike tour that descends

Mt. Wellington. Clients are collected from designated pick up points in Hobart using a 12 seat passenger van. All mountain biking equipment (i.e. bike, helmet, jacket, and gloves) is provided. The tour is appropriate for bike riders of all experience levels. This tour is offered from September through May. The summer months have the most tours with larger groups of clients ranging from 10-20. Mt. Wellington Descent tours take place twice daily, every day of the week as long as there are a sufficient number of clients. On average, there are 2,000 Mt. Wellington Descent clients per year.

Three hours are allotted for the tour including pickups and drop-offs. Once the tourists are picked up from Hobart, the van with a trailer and bikes drive up to the summit. Interpretation of natural and cultural values of Mt. Wellington is provided to clients as they drive up the mountain. Tours depart either from the summit or two kilometres below. Within that three hour time frame the clients mountain bike for one and a half hours on roads, designated walking tracks, and fire trails. Once they finish their descent of Mt. Wellington they continue on the road and ride to Salamanca Place. Weather plays a factor in determining where tours leave from or if tours are able to depart. If the roads are closed or if the weather creates unsafe riding conditions the tour will be cancelled. Also, clients may ride in the van for part of the tour if they do not wish to ride.

For the Mt. Wellington Descent tours, Under Down Under employs: one full time operations manager, two part time booking staff, and ten casual mountain bike guides. Some guides also serve as drivers. Mountain bike guide and van driver rosters are set up based on the employees availability.

Annually, there are about 2,000 clients and of this total 1,000 are overseas tourists. Interstate backpackers, friend and family groups make up their client base. There is a limit to how many clients can go on each trip. A tour will not proceed if there are fewer than three people signed up. This is due to financial operations and limited staff and vehicle availability. There is a maximum of 10 clients per guide to ensure the safety of the group and to provide a valuable tourism experience.

Under Down Under does some marketing to advertise the Mt. Wellington Descent tours. Examples of marketing include: display advertisements in tourist magazines,

printed brochures, and the Mt. Wellington Descent website. Mt. Wellington is portrayed to draw clients on the tour to experience riding down the mountain, enjoy the scenery and views from the summit, and the commentary guides provide on the ascent of the mountain before the descent.

#### **4.1.2 Mt. Wellington Walks**

Mt. Wellington Walks is one of three businesses operated under Adventure Planet. Adventure Planet also provides a bicycle hire service, skydiving, and kayaking tours. Tour packages include a combination of Adventure Planet services and products such as offering a day of bushwalking and kayaking at a discounted price when purchased together.

Mt. Wellington Walks conducts guided walking tours on Mt. Wellington. The tours commence in the morning when clients are collected from their accommodation by the tour guides and are driven up Mt. Wellington. Easy and more moderate level walks are tour options. Each type of walk lasts two and a half hours and includes a trip to the summit and lunch. After lunch, clients are driven back down the mountain and dropped off at their accommodation. Guides provide clients with interpretation about the natural and cultural values of the mountain and Hobart.

Mt. Wellington Walks employs 25 staff, five of which are regularly-employed casual walking guides. Approximately 36 walking excursions take place per year. A minimum of two and a maximum of 49 people are allowed on a tour. Average tour size is between two to ten clients. One guide and a driver would usually accompany a tour.

Mt. Wellington Walks do not utilise many sources to market their business. Since a majority of their clients come from overseas and interstate, the tourist information centre and travel agents provide information and suggestions about the Mt. Wellington Walks tours. Mt. Wellington Walks has a website that is linked to the Adventure Planet web pages as well as other tourism related websites. Clients usually find this operator independently through internet searches or by visiting travel information centres.



### **4.1.3 Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences**

Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences conduct guided bushwalking tours that take place in protected areas within Tasmania. The bushwalking and trekking tours include day- and multi-day walks. The Mt. Wellington tour is offered as a day walk. This tour begins when the guides pick up clients from their accommodation in Hobart and drive up Mt. Wellington. Depending on the fitness and experience levels of clients and weather conditions, the tour itinerary and walking tracks visited vary. Some outdoor clothing is provided as well as a prepared lunch. During the tour, guides interpret the geology, flora, fauna, and cultural values of Mt. Wellington. After the tour the clients are driven down the mountain back to their accommodation.

Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences employ 20 staff. There are ten tour guides and ten bus drivers. Two 12 passenger buses and one four passenger car provide transport for tour excursions. On average there are 150 clients per year. This equates to approximately 30 tours, including day walks and overnight trips. On average, 12 of these trips are day walks on Mt. Wellington. There are between one to 12 clients on each excursion. One third of clients, around 50 total, are from overseas (most originate from Europe and North America) and go on the day walks. Walking tours are available year round although business is slower during the months of April through October.

Most clients independently find Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences online through the website or by searching through other Tasmanian tourism web pages. There is no bias of advertising Mt. Wellington tours on the website. All possible tour destinations offered are represented equally on their web page and are sorted categorically by tour destination and length.

## **4.2 Government Agency Stakeholders**

There are several government agencies that are involved in the management of Wellington Park. Three managers were interviewed in this study:

- Michael Easton, Manager, Wellington Park Management Trust
- Martin Fieldhouse, Senior Business Development Officer, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service

- Dr. Claire Ellis, Director of Infrastructure and Industry Development, Tourism Tasmania.

The interviews asked questions on their role in managing the Park, how they viewed tourism in Tasmania and Mt. Wellington, and how they perceived developing tourism on Mt. Wellington.

#### **4.2.1 Infrastructure development and education**

Facilities on Mt. Wellington for visitors and other users are found at various locations. There is a visitor shelter at the summit, toilets, and car parks. Hobart City Council is responsible for the visitor shelter at the Pinnacle. The shelter is intended to be remodelled with improved interpretation panels, better formed walkways and toilets.

A visitor centre at the Springs is scheduled to begin construction at the end of November 2010. Michael Easton (pers. comm. 2010) commented that, “it is the hope that the visitor centre will be an information node where a variety of services can be delivered to both commercial and non-commercial users”. Both inside and outside the visitor centre there will be interpretation panels with information to educate visitors about Wellington Park and Hobart. Local residents will work as volunteers to staff the visitor centre. A Springs Zone Interpretation Plan has been drafted to provide the guidelines for appropriate interpretation and education at this location. An objective of the visitor centre is to portray Mt. Wellington as a great sightseeing destination and as a strong destination for natural and cultural heritage walks.

As a land manager, Michael Easton noted that protecting the values of the park and ensuring public safety were higher priorities than delivering educational and interpretive activities. His view of learning and interpretation was that the individual themselves choose what they want to learn. He felt that people have a natural and internal experience from looking at Mt. Wellington or by participating in recreational activities with or without partaking on a commercial tour. There is little interaction with commercial operators and Wellington Park managers.

#### **4.2.2 Permits for use and access**

The Commercial Visitor Services Transport Licence (CVS) was instituted to provide fair and equal opportunities for businesses. The objective of the CVS is to enlist businesses to meet minimum operating requirements: to have public liability insurance; and to ensure that operators have a valid transport licence. All ecotourism operators who conduct tours on Mt. Wellington have a CVS licence. Surprisingly, some coach/bus companies do not have a CVS licence (Fieldhouse 2010, pers. comm.). Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (TPWS) have engaged with the Department of Transport to monitor tourism businesses to ensure they have a CVS licence. Since TPWS engaged with the transport industry, most of the noncompliant coach lines are now licensed. Before there was a CVS, tourism transportation was unregulated (Fieldhouse 2010, pers. comm.).

Martin Fieldhouse, the Senior Business Development Officer from Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service, reviews CVS applications and grants business approvals. He receives about 30 CVS applications per year. Businesses that operate in National Parks, State Reserves, State Forests, other Crown Land, and Wellington Park must have a CVS licence. When a CVS licence requires access and use of Wellington Park, he and Michael Easton collaborate when reviewing and granting CVS licenses.

#### **4.2.3 Tourism in Tasmania**

The number of tourists to Australia and Tasmania has been in decline. The Tasmanian Visitor Survey (2010) identified a decrease in holiday and leisure visitors. To address this issue, TPWS will conduct an in depth visitor survey. It is the aim of the survey that results will provide information as to why the amount of visitors to National Parks, reserves, and other protected areas has declined. Recommendations will be developed and implemented to increase the number of visitors to National Parks and other protected areas.

When asked about how businesses could improve the number of tourists to Tasmania, Dr. Claire Ellis, Director of Infrastructure and Industry Development from Tourism Tasmania, had some proposals. Dr. Ellis said that the marketing and tourism of Tasmania is complex and presents challenges. Over arching marketing plans are in place and are managed by Tourism Tasmania, but they do not market individual

commercial operators. Marketing is highly specific to each business especially when it comes to ecotourism. She mentioned that advice and suggestions can be provided to businesses starting up to help market themselves. Business tool kits are available for new operators and workshops are offered where they can learn to create a successful business (Tourism Tasmania 2010). Tourism Tasmania promotes Mt. Wellington as a tourist destination. Some commercial operators are highlighted for the tour experiences they provide on Mt. Wellington.

### **4.3 Chapter Summary**

This chapter included detailed descriptions of the key informant interviews that were conducted. The participating commercial operators were discussed. Their businesses were described including the structure of their operations, an outline of tours, an assessment of their client base, and views of developing tourism on Mt. Wellington. This was followed by a discussion of the key informant interviews conducted with Wellington Park managers. Tourism development, education, and tourism in Tasmania were topics of examination.

It was found that commercial operators conduct a variety of day tours on Mt. Wellington. Tour group numbers are limited by the amount of clients that sign up, the time of year, and their capacity. The summer months were when the operators generated the most business. The tour operators expand their business to offer tours on Mt. Wellington as well as at other protected areas in Tasmania. A CVS licence is required to conduct tours on Mt. Wellington. The visitor shelter at the Pinnacle will be renovated and a visitor centre will be constructed at the end of 2010 to improve the visitor experience and attract more tourists to Mt. Wellington. The next chapter will analyse the results from the key informant interviews.

## Chapter 5: Results

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The objective of this chapter is to discuss the results of the key informant interviews. A thematic content analysis was performed after every interview to identify key subject matter. Each theme is discussed in detail regarding the implications on tourism, commercial operators, and Mt. Wellington.

### 5.1 Key Themes

A thematic analysis was undertaken to identify key themes in each interview. After each interview, the content of the meetings were reflected upon and analysed. Repetition of central ideas, opinions, and business models revealed significant findings. The predominant themes identified were:

- Multiple tours offered other than Mt. Wellington
- Close proximity and easy access
- A peak during the busy summer season
- Valuable attributes highlighted
- Displaying differing views of development on Mt. Wellington

#### 5.1.1 Multiple tour options other than Mt. Wellington

All three commercial operators conduct tours at locations other than Mt. Wellington. The tours vary in duration, location, and experience. The operators stated that in order to maintain their business, other tour options must be made available. This was emphasised by Andrew West of Under Down Under Tours, who said,

“Mt. Wellington Descent is a special product we offer. We would not be able to operate if we didn’t also conduct tours that offer different experiences at other locations.”

Businesses that have additional tour products expand the variety of tour experiences because of limited numbers of clients in Hobart throughout the year. Another way operators sustain their business is through sharing clients with other operators. Leigh Kemp from Mt. Wellington Walks said, “We offer tour packages with other tourism operators. This is a helpful and easy strategy to share clients with other businesses

and take on additional clients.” An example of this is when clients book a tour with Under Down Under Tours in the morning and then in the afternoon go skydiving with Mt. Wellington Walks sister operator, Skydive Tasmania. By adopting this approach, the operators generate more business and provide tourists with more varied experiences.

### 5.1.2 Close proximity and easy access



**Figure 6: Map of Wellington Park and Hobart (Google™ 2010)**

The close distance of Hobart to Mt. Wellington and the ease of access demonstrate why the mountain is so unique and valuable. This was quite apparent to all interview participants. Commercial operators recognise this valuable attribute and use this to their advantage. This was expressed by the Managing Director of Under Down Under Tours, Andrew West, “Mt. Wellington is an ideal location to operate in because of its uniqueness and close proximity to the city.” A similar response was given by Leigh Kemp from Mt. Wellington Walks who said,

“Mt. Wellington is close to the city and is easy to get to. Many of the walking tracks are easy to do so clients of varying experience levels can participate. We conduct day tours in the morning so you finish by lunch time. This enables the clients to do other things later in the day.”

The relatively short duration of tours on Mt. Wellington coincide with the operators’ view that close proximity and easy access of the mountain is attractive to tourists.

### **5.1.3 Busy summer season**

The summer months are the time of year when tour operators generate the most business. Due to the nature of tours and summer weather, it is advantageous to take clients out at this time. There is also a higher flux of tourists visiting Tasmania during the summer season. Under Down Under Tours cited summer as their busiest season. A small percentage of their summer business is composed of cruise ship passengers. Under Down Under Tours only run Mt. Wellington Descent Tours from September through May.

The slow season for Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences is from April through October. This is similar for Mt. Wellington Walks. This operator gets the most clients during the summer months, but still conducts tours on Mt. Wellington if there is sufficient demand. Since these two operators remain open year round and offer additional tours throughout the state, they are able to sustain their business.



#### 5.1.4 Valuable attributes



**Photo 4: Mt. Wellington, Shaun Brooks 2007 ©**

There are numerous attractive characteristics that motivate tourists to visit Tasmania and explore Wellington Park. “Tasmania offers several different versions of a nature tour experience. The state has always been and will continue to be a natural attraction,” said Dr. Claire Ellis of Tourism Tasmania. All commercial operators are accredited ecotourism and Australian tourism classified businesses. They strive to provide long lasting experiences to their clients and share what they feel is special and unique about Mt. Wellington.

When asked about why tours are given on Mt. Wellington, Graham McLean from Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences said,

“We lead tours to highlight what is unique and special about Tasmania. We want to share the experience and explore the geology, landforms, flora, and fauna of Mt. Wellington. I enjoy expressing why Mt. Wellington is special and to instil those values with our clients.”

Enjoying the natural environment while mountain biking down Mt. Wellington offers a distinctly interesting and exciting experience. Andrew West from Under Down



Under Tours added, “Mt. Wellington offers an experience like no other and the views from the summit are spectacular.” This is another feature that attracts clients to partake in Mt. Wellington tours.

#### **5.1.5 Future tourism for Mt. Wellington**

Questions relating to tourism development on Mt. Wellington generated markedly different responses from the operators. This ranged from enhancing the marketing of Tasmania to attract more tourists to improving and creating more built infrastructure. Some operators express that the state as a whole needs increased marketing to draw in more visitors. “It would be good to entice international tourists to visit Tasmania and Mt. Wellington. I feel that there needs to be more money spent to market Tasmania to the world. There should be more ways for tourists to learn about Tasmania,” suggested Graham McLean from Tasmanian Wilderness Experiences. Tackling this issue of marketing is challenging affirmed Dr. Claire Ellis of Tourism Tasmania.

Speaking about the roads on Mt. Wellington, Andrew West from Under Down Under Tours stated, “The road through Fern Tree and to the Springs is very narrow and makes for a dangerous situation to mix cyclists and other traffic. There is a big opportunity for tourism to develop in Wellington Park. Infrastructure has to be developed to meet demands for example, safety signage and road improvements.” The two other operators also agreed that more road work is required to ensure the safety of visitors travelling on the roads and for them to be sustainable for future users.

Leigh Kemp from Mt. Wellington Walks felt that having a visitor centre at the Springs would be beneficial but this is not a critical issue for their business. He said that if such a development were to take place, “the [mountain] would lose its charm of being wild and surrounded by nature.” The other operators did not have strong positive or negative feelings towards building a visitor centre at the Springs.

### **5.2 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the results from the key informant interviews. A thematic content analysis identified the key themes from the interviews. Firstly, operators

offer multiple tour options other than Mt. Wellington. The businesses offer a variety of other tours of varying duration, in different locations, and offer alternative tour experiences. They do not solely rely on Mt. Wellington tours to sustain their business. Secondly, commercial operators conduct tours on Mt. Wellington because of its close proximity to the city and easy access. All operators generate the most business during the summer months. Under Down Under Tours is the only operator that does not conduct offer tours on Mt. Wellington year round. The fourth key theme identified was that all operators highlight the valuable attributes of Mt. Wellington. The operators recognised the importance of interpreting what makes Mt. Wellington unique and special to their clients. Lastly, operators have differing views on the future of tourism development on Mt. Wellington. Some felt that the marketing of Tasmania and Mt. Wellington could be improved and that more infrastructure needs to be built on Mt. Wellington to accommodate visitors.

## Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

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The aim of this chapter is to discuss the results of the research. The implications of these results are examined in relation to tourism and environmental management of Wellington Park. An analysis of the relevance of this study is compared to other research conducted of commercial use in protected areas. Management and tourism recommendations are reviewed.

### 6.1 Key Findings

It is challenging for commercial operators that conduct tours on Mt. Wellington to maintain a sustainable and profitable business. To have a successful operation they must employ a number of tactics. The research found that: commercial operators rely on other tours to keep their businesses viable; the summer season is the busiest period; specific clients are targeted for tours; operators conduct tours on Mt. Wellington for similar reasons; the valuable attributes of Mt. Wellington are highlighted; and there is limited interaction between commercial operators and Wellington Park managers.

#### 6.1.1 Commercial operator motivations

Commercial users of Wellington Park participate in two forms of recreation: walking and mountain biking. The tour groups are mostly comprised of interstate and overseas visitors that are younger aged back packers, families, or older travellers. Some arrive in Tasmania on cruise ships. Tourists and commercial operators alike enjoy partaking in recreational activities in Wellington Park. Similar responses to the reason why include users are able to socialise, gain exercise, enjoy the tranquillity of nature, and relax (Chiu and Kriwoken 2003; Thomas *et al.* 2005).

The Mt. Wellington tours offered by commercial operators share some qualities. The logistics and structure of tours are similar. The duration of tours go for half a day and last about four hours. The operators provide a pick up and drop off service for clients. The tours feature an additional activity such as providing lunch to increase the value of their tour and experience or supplying outdoor gear.

Operators provide clients with an eco- and nature-based tour product where they have a distinct, special, and unique experience. Information pertaining to the natural environment, conservation, and ecological and environmental sustainability are shared. The commercial operators in Wellington Park do not have specific desired results pertaining to environmental behaviour. The experience provided by the tour activity, scenery, and safety of the group are the focus. This is contrary to the study undertaken by Powell *et al.* 2009. During rafting tours in the Grand Canyon (Powell *et al.* 2009), tour guides emphasised learning and improving an understanding of the tour location, natural history, and other information to achieve a desired outcome of maintaining knowledge learned on tour.

The motivations of visitors travelling to alpine areas were for the enjoyment of nature and relaxation (Thomas *et al.* 2005). Visitors to Mt. Wellington also cited similar reasons for exploring the area such as exercise, relaxation, and enjoying nature (Chiu and Kriwoken 2003). The uniqueness of protected areas in alpine regions is attractive to tourists (Thomas *et al.* 2005).

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is one of the world's most popular protected areas. Many of the management tools implemented by the Marine Park are similarly in place in Wellington Park. Some examples include a permit requirement for tour operators to conduct business within the protected area, management plans, educational and interpretive programs for visitors and operators, and monitoring of activities (Chadwick 2004).

### **6.1.2 Implications for tourism**

Mt. Wellington is portrayed as a special and unique tourist destination where a variety of recreational activities can take place. The tourism operators advertise their Mt. Wellington tours equally to operations in other areas. Additional strategies that attract clients to partake in Mt. Wellington tours must be applied such as offering more tour options and taking advantage of the cruise ship client base in Hobart.

The summer months are when the commercial operators receive the most business. Although this time of year is when the operators are busiest, they are unable to attract as many clients to their Mt. Wellington tours compared to the other tours they offer.

By expanding their business and offering more tour experiences they increase their chances of generating more clients.

Since a portion of summer business comes from cruise ship passengers, this source should be taken advantage of more. There is a trade-off that must be considered. Cruise ships require a substantial discount when groups of their passengers sign up for tours (West 2010, pers. comm.). The increased volume of tourists from cruise ships forces tour operators to offer more tours than normal. Pressure is put on commercial operators to attract clients to ensure tours are filled and enough guides are available. Given that cruise ship passengers have limited time for excursions off the boat, Mt. Wellington tours are well suited for these tourists.

Wellington Park managers and commercial operators have limited interaction with each other. Meetings and other forms of engagement do not occur on a planned, consistent, or scheduled basis. Park managers and commercial operators lack the desire to initiate much written or verbal contact. It should be noted that the commercial operators expressed interest in being more involved in tourism planning for Wellington Park. The lack of support staff and funding for Wellington Park most likely prevents them from engaging with commercial operators regarding the management of Wellington Park. Increased communication between tour operators and Park managers would be beneficial for improving the Wellington Park Management Plan, developing tourism on Mt. Wellington, ensuring compliance, and conducting appropriate monitoring.

## **6.2 Management opportunities**

Eco- and nature-based tourism in Tasmania has great potential for further expansion. For this to occur, sufficient funding for infrastructure, staff, and management must be promoted. Further development of ecotourism and encouragement of conservation and visitation to protected areas can be achieved if coordinated environmental management is implemented. Proactive and cooperative interaction between protected area managers and tour operators is required to put into practice appropriate education and conservation programs and management.

It is important to promote Wellington Park as a unique, relaxing, and peaceful destination. By increasing and strengthening marketing, brand, knowledge of

Tasmania, and its natural attractions more tourists will be drawn to the state. There should be a focus on the uniqueness of Hobart being located within very close proximity to Wellington Park. Creating an emphasis on attracting summer tourists and cruise ships can increase business opportunities for the tour operators. Some downsides to consider are: sharing clients with other operators does not necessarily lead to generating more business, clients from cruise ships require a discounted rate which may not build a lot of revenue for the operator, and it is not guaranteed when a cruise ship comes to Hobart that many of its passengers will sign up for Mt. Wellington tours. There are some challenges that have to be met in order for the development of tourism and management of Wellington Park, yet there are great possibilities if action is taken.

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Bushwalking information

WELLINGTON PARK MANAGEMENT TRUST • 2007

### Wellington Park Bush Walking Information

The extensive network of tracks on the eastern face of Mount Wellington provides a range of walking opportunities for visitors to Wellington Park.

#### CHOOSE THE RIGHT ROUTE

An introduction to some of the walks, track conditions, length and difficulty is included on the Wellington Park Information Sheet and on the back of the Wellington Park Recreation Map. Walkers should choose a route to suit - tracks vary in quality and gradient. Some are well marked and easy to follow, however, remote and higher altitude tracks are often rough or wet underfoot. Navigation skills may be required on some routes, especially during poor visibility. It is recommended that walkers carry the Wellington Park Recreation Map 1:20,000 - available from Service Tasmania shops and other outlets.

#### SAFETY IN WELLINGTON PARK

All mountain regions in Tasmania are subject to rapid and extreme changes in weather. Severe conditions with snow, sleet and high winds can occur with startling suddenness, even in summer. Also, walkers should be aware of the risk of bush fire and not access remote areas of the Park on high fire danger days. At all times, walkers should have a plan for exiting the Park and be adequately equipped for fire related emergencies.

#### BE PREPARED

Ensure you are comfortable and safe for the walk you choose. Sturdy boots, warm clothing, waterproof jacket and overpants, food and drink, and a map and compass should be taken/worn on longer and more difficult routes. Mobile phone coverage is variable throughout the Park.

Walkers should be aware that some tracks are shared use. Bicycles are permitted on formed roads and fire trails, and selected walking tracks, including the Pipeline and Radfords Track.

#### REDUCE YOUR IMPACTS

- Take only photos and memories and leave only footprints.
- Ensure your equipment is clean upon entering the Park to prevent the spread of weeds and plant diseases.
- Use toilets provided when possible.

If there are no toilets then walk 100m away from water and the track and dig a 15cm hole to bury your waste and toilet paper.

Fires may only be lit in designated fireplaces in certain huts and picnic areas using the wood provided. It is an offence to light any fire during a total fire ban. Visitors are not encouraged to access remote areas of the Park during higher fire danger as evacuation may be difficult.

For further information on Wellington Park contact: Wellington Park Management Trust on 03 6238 2176 or visit the website at [www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au](http://www.wellingtonpark.tas.gov.au)

LEGEND

ROADS

Major road with route marker ..... 10.4

Other road with route marker ..... 25.6

Restricted use

Formed .....

Vehicular track with gate/barrier .....

WALKING TRACKS

Formed: high quality, may be locally rough .....

Unformed: clear and rough; marked or cairned .....

Great Short Walk: Bicycles allowed .....

Wellington Park Boundary .....

Transmission line .....

Public toilets, Picnic area, Car park, Information .....

Looletout, Waterfall .....

Buildings - Public, Private .....

Dense-medium timber; Scattered trees & scrub .....

Contours (20 metre interval) .....

Restricted area (public access on nominated tracks only) .....

Roads and trails on this map do not necessarily indicate a public right of way. Some tracks or private property are not shown, as requested by landowners. Walking tracks shown within Wellington Park are those approved by the Wellington Park Management Trust.

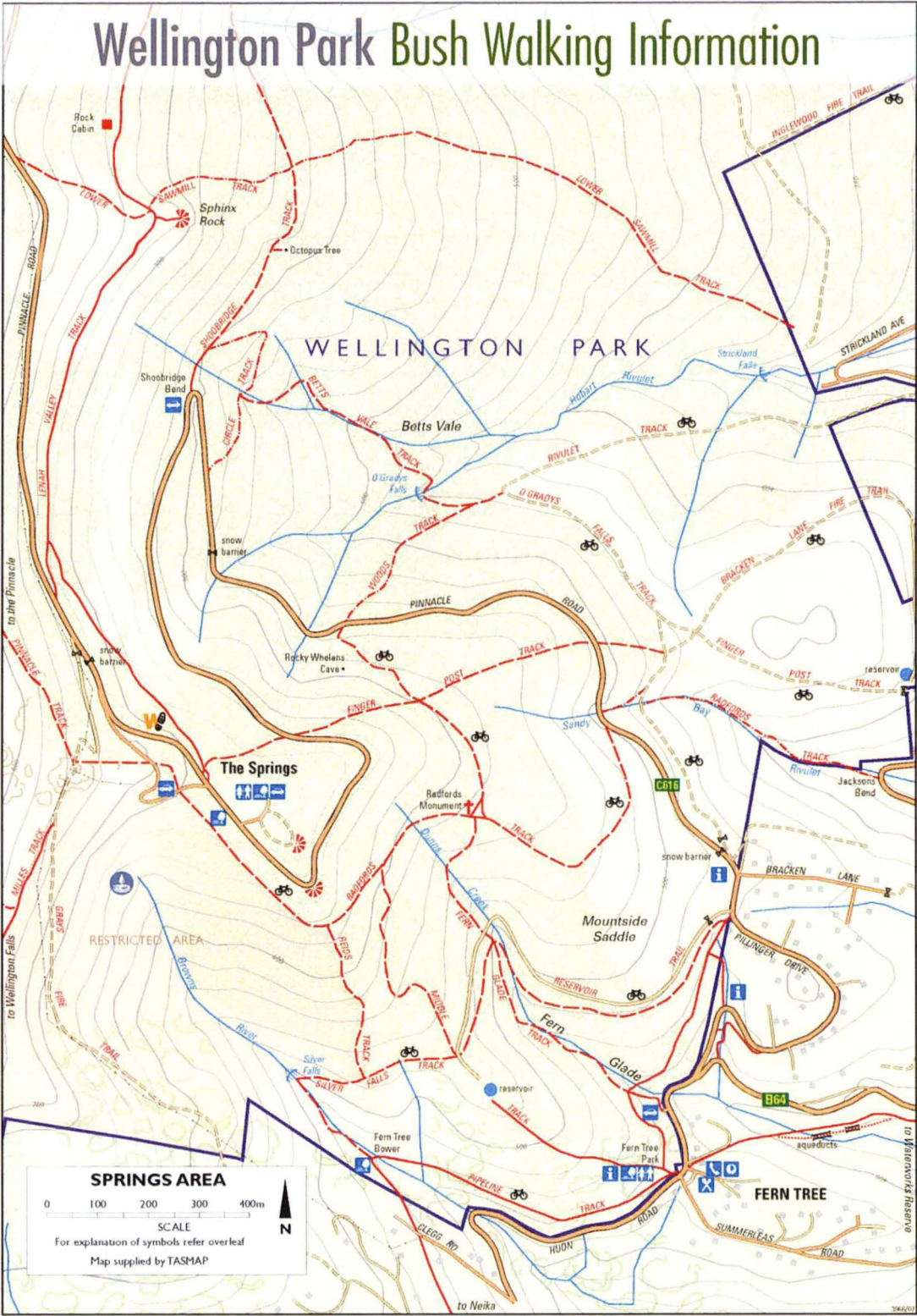
For detailed maps see the TASMAT/Wellington Park Recreation Map.



Source: WPMT 2007





Appendix 2: Bushwalking Map of Wellington Park




Source: WPMT 2007

	WALK	DESTINATION	DEPARTURE	VIA	TIME	GROUP	DESCRIPTION
VERY SHORT WALKS	1	Zig Zag viewing point	Pinnacle carpark	Zig Zag Track	20min return	B	High altitude environment and sweeping views over Hobart.
	2	Fern Glade Circuit	Fern Glade carpark	Fern Glade Track	30min return	A	Shady tree fern gullies and moss covered rocks in bubbling streams.
	3	Octopus Tree	Shoobridge Bend (Pinnacle Road)	Shoobridge Track	30min return	A	Eucalyptus tree gripping a giant boulder - great for kids.
	4	Silver Falls	Fern Tree Park	Pipeline Track & Silver Falls Track	40min return	A	Beautiful cool area shaded by tree ferns and historic waterfall.
	5	Sphinx Rock	The Springs	Lenah Valley Track	45min return	A	Easy and level access to great views of Hobart and the eastern shore.
	6	Radfords Monument & Rocky Whelans Cave	Pinnacle Road (600m below Shoobridge Bend)	Walking Track	45min return	A	Monument to George Radford and bushranger's cave from the 1850s.
SHORT WALKS	7	Milles Track viewing point	The Springs	Milles Track	1 hr return	A	Level walk through shrubby vegetation with extended views over channel region.
	8	The Springs	Fern Tree	Fern Glade Track	1 hr 30 min rtn	B	A tree fern gully, rising through drier eucalyptus forest, with bubbling streams.
	9	Junction Cabin	Old Farm Road	Myrtle Gully Track	2 hrs return	B	Magnificent shaded rainforest gully, with handcrafted wooden bridges over mountain streams.
HALF-DAY WALKS	10	Neika	Fern Tree Park	Pipeline Track	3 hrs return	B	Premier level walking or bicycling track along historic water supply system. Look out for Fern Tree Bower and Wishing Well, and Twin Bridges.
	11	The Springs	Lenah Valley Road	Lenah Valley Track	3 hrs return	B	Steadily climbing walk that takes in a range of vegetation types. Includes spectacular New Town Falls.
	12	Collins Cap	Myrtle Forest picnic area	Myrtle Forest Track and Collins Bonnet Track	3 hrs return	C	Steadily climbing walk through a variety of vegetation types. Spectacular and long range views.
	13	Organ Pipes Walk	The Springs	Lenah Valley Track, Hunters Track & Organ Pipes Track	4 hrs circuit	B	A range of views and experiences, with some challenging sections. Includes the Sphinx Rock walk.
	14	Pinnacle, Mount Wellington	The Springs	Pinnacle Track & Zig Zag Track	4 hrs return	C	Steep and rocky track with great views of Organ Pipes & Pinnacle, Hobart, River Derwent & East Coast.
ALL-DAY WALKS	15	Pinnacle Circuit	The Springs	Pinnacle Track, Zig Zag Track, South Wellington Track & Ice House Track	5 hrs circuit	C	Challenging high altitude walk through exposed alpine heathlands and forests.
	16	Collins Bonnet	Collinsvale	Myrtle Forest Track & Collins Cap Track	5 hrs return	C	Challenging walk ranging from tree fern rainforest to sub-alpine scrub, with great views in all directions.
	17	Collins Bonnet	Big Bend (Pinnacle Road)	Big Bend Fire Trail & Collins Bonnet Track	6 hrs 30 min rtn	C	Challenging walk resulting in 360° views from trig-station on Collins Bonnet.
	18	Wellington Falls	Neika	Pipeline Track & Wellington Falls Track	Walk: 6hrs rtn Cycle & walk: 2hrs 30min rtn	B	Beautiful natural environment. Spectacular views of Cathedral Rock & Wellington Falls.
	19	Wellington Falls	The Springs	Milles Track & Wellington Falls Track	7 hrs return	C	Fairly level and dry walk, including boulder fields. Long views over the Channel region.

 **Easy:** unlikely to cause difficulties for inexperienced walkers e.g. no steep grades requiring climbing.

 **Moderate:** some sections may be demanding for people with limited fitness, experience or without appropriate walking equipment e.g. some climbing but not overly steep or sustained.

 **Hard:** sections of the track require walkers to be relatively fit, experienced and to have appropriate walking equipment.

